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Speak seldom, but to important subjects, except such as particularly relate to your constituents, and, in the former case, make yourself perfectly master of the subject.

George Washington (1787)

NATE JACKSON

Trump's '60 Minutes' of Election Evaluation

Ross Douthat interviewed the president, who had much to say about many things related to the GOP's midterm disaster.

After the Republican Party endured a shellacking last Tuesday, President Donald Trump wasted little time trying to salvage some of its lessons. To do so, he sat for an interview with Ross Douthat, the new guy on the block at CBS News's "60 Minutes."

First, a little background on CBS. Former New York Times writer Bari Weiss took over at CBS News a year ago — after having launched the successful Free Press — and she immediately set about making changes to mitigate the eyeball network's gross left-wing bias. Specifically, she began an overhaul of "60 Minutes," which included firing longtime correspondent Scott Pelley and others. Anderson Cooper also left. Weiss hired Douthat, a conservative journalist, from her own former paper, The New York Times.

Weiss is no conservative, though, and none of that means CBS is suddenly fair, or that "60 Minutes" doesn't still have a left-wing agenda at times. Why, just a couple of weeks ago, our Hudson Baldwin hammered the show for its dishonest empathy for a deported illegal alien. But at least Douthat is an honest broker.

So, back to the interview with President Trump. Douthat and Trump talked about many things, but I'll focus most on immigration after Trump admitted that his deportation policy might have been "too tough."

The president believes he "got an A+ for closing up the border" and "very high marks for getting the bad ones out." He's undoubtedly right about that.

"But I get hurt because we also took people that had good jobs, that created one violation, or breaking of the law, and that was that they came into the country illegally," the president continued. "Now, there is a large part of the country that think that they should be put out. And there's a large part of the country that think that they should be allowed to stay if they're good people working in a landscaping company, or working in a hotel, or doing something, right? And in some cases, paying taxes."

He's also undoubtedly right about that. According to exit polling, 58% of voters said Team Trump went too far.

Frankly, Americans hold a contradictory position on immigration. Most folks think we needed to close the border but not do anything to the millions of people who crossed illegally. *Stop committing the crime*, they say, *but don't punish anybody who already committed those crimes.*

Logically, it makes little sense. But it's not only about logic, is it? No, it's about emotion, though that's not all bad. Compassion for the sojourner is a Christian virtue. Yet we are — or *should be* — a nation of laws, and breaking laws comes with consequences. When you cross the border illegally, the legal consequence is deportation. The debate is over the conditions for forgoing that consequence.

Once a person has successfully evaded law enforcement for years, working as a dishwasher, hotel maid, or lawn guy, it gets harder to win public support for that consequence. That's understandable and certainly not all bad, but it's somewhat dissonant with the desire for a closed border.

Moreover, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) has had a major optics problem over the last year or so. Democrat sanctuary jurisdictions refuse to cooperate with federal law enforcement, making ICE's job much harder and more dangerous. Throw in some disobedient and violent protesters, and people get killed. Could ICE have done better? Definitely. But leftists lit the fire and stoked the flames specifically to discredit ICE.

It worked.

An interesting side note: On Friday, Trump tapped Stephen Miller to replace White House Chief of Staff Susie Wiles, who resigned on Thursday. Miller is widely seen as the architect of the administration's tough deportation policy. He's also combative, calling the two U.S. citizens killed by ICE last year "domestic terrorists" and "would-be assassins." That was overwrought and entirely unnecessary. In any case, his promotion signals that Trump won't back off much. The CBS interview was recorded before the Miller announcement.

Immigration was far from the only topic Trump discussed in the interview.

On the economy, he opined, "I think it was bad messaging, maybe by me, but I would talk about it all the time." He insisted "the numbers are phenomenal," but "we couldn't get the word across." He's right.

The war with Iran hurt the economy, especially gas prices, and Trump acknowledged that voters "didn't like the war." Still, he believes he acted correctly and in U.S. national interests: "I think historically, this will be a very good decision. Is it a good decision for today and tomorrow? Maybe not. But ... I have to go with what's right for our country. ... If they had a nuclear weapon during my term, I would be excoriated far worse than what's happened." He's right again.

"I've stopped them from having a nuclear weapon," Trump added. "That's a big thing."

Where Trump started, however, was with himself. Asked for his analysis of the GOP's "historic defeat," Trump began, "Well, number one, I was not on the ballot."

Actually, he kinda was. "You were out on the trail," Douthat noted, "and you said, 'Vote like I'm on the ballot.'"

If I had to sum up not just the interview but Trump's second term so far, I'd say he frequently does the right thing but too often shoots himself in the foot with his rhetoric or the execution. His presidency isn't over, but thanks to that truth and victorious Democrat opposition, it's going to be tough sledding.

Follow Nate Jackson on X.

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DOUGLAS ANDREWS

Republicans Are on the Clock

The GOP not only needs a strategy for the final two years of Trump's presidency, but a strategy for the final two months of the Republican-controlled Congress.

On January 3, House and Senate Republicans will give up their gavels, and Donald Trump will take on a new role as President Veto. But that's 55 days away. The real question is: What happens between now and then?

Somewhat lost amid all the gnashing of teeth about last Tuesday's shellacking is the fact that Republicans are still in control of all three branches of government. Granted, the GOP has a razor-thin margin in the House, and its 53-47 advantage in the Senate is perhaps even more tenuous when we consider the Trump-derangement of Kentucky's Mitch McConnell and Alaska's Lisa Murkowski, and the bitterness of lame ducks like North Carolina's Thom Tillis and Texas's John Cornyn, and the reliable unreliability of Maine's Susan Collins. And the "leadership" of John Thune.

John Solomon at Just the News offers an interesting list of eight "power moves" Donald Trump and the Republicans could still make — either in the next 55 days or sometime thereafter through the power of the executive branch. Those ideas range from hamstringing spendthrift Democrats by passing multiyear budgets for all key agencies in order to lock in federal spending until after Trump leaves office, to using the funds recovered from the administration's fraud-fighting efforts to help secure Medicare and Social Security, to revoking the tax-exempt status of leftist anti-American (but I repeat myself) nonprofits, to blocking the blue states' effort to do away with the Electoral College via the so-called National Popular Vote Interstate Compact, to passing the key elements of the SAVE America Act — photo ID and proof of citizenship — through the budget reconciliation process, to using the tax code to go after quasi-governmental leftist organizations like the American Medical Association, the American Bar Association, and the teachers' unions.

Then there's the judiciary. "The stakes could not be higher," writes Article III founder and President Mike Davis. "Outgoing Senate Majority Leader John Thune ... must use every remaining day to confirm all of President Trump's pending judicial nominees. That means 23 judges, four for the circuit courts and 19 for the district courts, before the gavel changes hands." Why are these judgeships so important? Davis continues:

> Appellate courts are the most consequential. They get the final word in the vast majority of cases. The Supreme Court grants only about 1% of all petitions for review. For nearly every litigant in federal court in America, the circuit court is the last stop.
>
> President Trump has nominated four outstanding jurists to strengthen key appellate benches: Anna St. John and Todd Butler to the 5th Circuit, Lee Rudofsky to the 8th Circuit and Dan Domenico to the 10th Circuit. St. John, Rudofsky and Domenico already serve with distinction on the district courts in Louisiana, Arkansas and Colorado. All four are well prepared to step into these roles.

Speaking of the third coequal branch of government, there's another hugely important matter here that Republicans should consider: the future of the Supreme Court. Stalwart justices Samuel Alito and Clarence Thomas are 76 and 78 respectively. And Alito recently sounded about as likely to leave the High Court as Jordan Belfort was to leave Stratton Oakmont.

Which leaves Justice Thomas, whom every constitutional conservative loves and admires. But unless the GOP has a secret plan to nullify last Tuesday's election results, Thomas should consider his age and the electoral landscape and refuse to be the Republican version of Ruth Bader Ginsburg. We can't afford to cough up the third branch of government. Thomas, at 78, is a full seven years past the life expectancy of a black American male. And the electoral map for the next two Senate cycles doesn't look at all favorable. Which means he'll likely be at least 84 by the time a Republican president *might* have a Republican Senate with which to nominate and seat a worthy successor.

Florida Governor Ron DeSantis recently observed, "Chance of confirming a worthy successor to Justice Thomas and/or Alito during President Trump's term: Zero." DeSantis is certainly right if he's talking about January 3 and beyond. But there are still 55 days during which to prove him wrong.

We should build a monument to Justice Thomas, and communities across the United States should name streets and schools for him. But Donald Trump should have a heart-to-heart with him this week, and he should suggest a 50-year-old strict constructionist to replace him. (For context, Trump needed just 38 days to replace Ruth Bader Ginsburg with Amy Coney Barrett in the fall of 2020. The Democrats and the media could shriek all they want, but there's nothing they can do besides shriek. Indeed, the shrieking of the Left would be like cool rain on a blistering hot day.)

For many years now, the Supreme Court has been the mostly conservative bulwark against leftist legislative overreach. We can't afford to lose Justice Thomas's seat.

Questions abound about the future of the American Experiment, but none of them have the urgency of this one: Will the Republicans of the 119th Congress quietly slink away during the next 55 days, or will they come together with a sense of urgency and do the vital work of the people who elected them? Because this much we know: The Democrats and their Democratic Socialist fellow travelers are *most definitely* going to go to work on January 3.

The Republicans have 55 more days in power, and they can go out with a whimper or a bang. So far, all I hear is a lot of whimpering — that, and a "60 Minutes" stopwatch going *tick tick tick tick tick tick tick tick tick*.

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HUDSON BALDWIN

DeSantis Evaluates the GOP

Ron DeSantis runs a state where Republicans actually won these midterms. Can his more traditional brand of conservatism take the party back?

The so-called "blue tsunami" washed across America. Only a few states held firm, including the obvious deep-red culprits, as well as Florida.

The Sunshine State has grown more conservative over the last couple of decades, and much of that recent progress can be attributed to Ron DeSantis. Florida's current governor has maintained a strong track record and expanded Republican voter registration.

DeSantis didn't pull any punches when assessing the election and criticized the GOP's handling of core civic virtues — all of which any political party should uphold.

First, he mentioned voting on the release of the Epstein files: "We ran as Republicans on saying we need to do that. And then you actually have people in the Congress voting against release when the attorney general said she had all this horrific stuff on her desk and that people were gonna be held accountable."

He also talked about the issues with congressional insider trading: "It's untenable when you have people going in trading stocks. I've never traded stocks since I've been in elected office. How do you have no investment acumen, and then all of a sudden get elected to Congress, and then you're outperforming Warren Buffett?"

Ron DeSantis's brand has been doing what he promised. Voters have rewarded that. He presents that in stark contrast to Washington GOP leaders, and he specifically pointed to President Donald Trump.

"He obviously ran saying he wasn't going to do a Middle East war, and they did. So, we had some of our voters who've checked out because they're like, *I didn't want any more Middle East wars, and now we're doing it*. And what's happened is it's kind of an open-ended conflict, and it's having a direct impact on people's finances. Gas is higher. It hurts people, working-class people, and it's higher because of this conflict. That's just a fact. If you can't admit that to voters, then you're gaslighting them, and they're not going to listen to you on other things."

DeSantis hasn't always been a huge fan of the current administration's tactics, but he played along so long as Team Trump controlled the party. However, since the midterm has evidently signaled the nation's shift against the Trump administration and associates, the Florida governor has a potentially popular position among Republicans and the nation at large.

The question of the 2028 presidential election looms large in the minds of Republicans looking to return to form from a likely lame duck presidency. Perhaps the era of the MAGA Republicans is over, and the American people want literally any other option. One window into that will be JD Vance's presidential prospects.

Betting odds have Vance's nominee chances at around 30%, down from nearly 60% just a couple of months ago. Marco Rubio has steadily crept up over the past few weeks, and has held firm even post-midterms. But Ron DeSantis's chances have shot up this past week, taking most of the odds that Vance lost.

It seems clear why. Republicans tried the populist experiment for a decade and experienced some high highs and low lows. In promoting policy, President Trump has largely been successful. But in governing a country and catering to the people, he has not been as successful. DeSantis presents a stark contrast. He displays competency in governing Florida. He's managed his economy well and improved Floridians' quality of life over recent years. Because he's done that, he's been able to engage in his more ideological battles with little backlash.

DeSantis is actively pointing out the flaws of the Republican strategy, and his record indicates he could fix it. He is primed for a run for the Oval Office. But will he defeat the likes of Vance and Rubio, as well as the strong Democrat contenders, to keep the Oval Office red? That's anyone's guess — or online bet.

THOMAS GALLATIN

Newsom's Upside-Down View of Justice

The California Democrat governor has commuted the death sentences of all the state's death row inmates in the name of "justice."

EMMY GRIFFIN

Voters Draw the Line on Women's Sports

Even in deep-blue states, boys playing in girls' sports is deeply unpopular. Will the Marxists in DC get the message?

GREGORY LYAKHOV

Republicans Have a Winning Message — Why Didn't They Use It?

One of the biggest reasons for Republicans' midterm losses was the conservative movement's messaging failures.

RICH LOWRY

Fear Jon Ossoff

Youthful and good-looking, with a taste for soaring, idealistic rhetoric, he could activate the Democratic reflex to always look for the next JFK.

ROGER HELLE

We're Outnumbered Again! Or Are We?

As Christians, we may lose a few battles, but we continue fighting on our knees and at the ballot box.

EXECUTIVE NEWS SUMMARY

Miller replacing Wiles
The political shakeups in the Trump administration after the disastrous midterm results continued over the weekend, with Stephen Miller promoted to White House chief of staff and Susie Wiles moving to Donald Trump's political operation. Miller, an immigration hardliner who has drawn significant flak for his strong position on deportations, stepped into his new role on Monday. While the staffing change gives the appearance that Wiles is taking the fall for the midterm disaster, Trump mostly avoided blaming her, saying, "I want to thank her for her service as Chief of Staff — She has done a great job!" Miller, the former deputy chief of staff for policy, earned strong condemnation from Democrats. "Trump couldn't have made a worse choice," said Hakeem Jeffries, who has announced his candidacy for speaker of the House. "Our Democratic majorities will fight him every step of the way."

Stock markets drop post-midterms
Once the dust settled after the midterms, the GOP wasn't the only thing to take a hit. The stock market dropped 12% in the wake of the elections, one of the largest drops on record. Much of this can be attributed to Democrats' stance against data centers and the AI boom in general, which is exactly what's propping up the American economy right now. However, the market has historically risen after an election cycle, often rising significantly in the year that follows. A stable market typically follows when a government isn't rapidly changing policy. Given the government deadlock that's likely to ensue over the next couple of years, the market will likely return to form soon.

House likely to impeach Hegseth
After the midterm election, calls from Democrats to impeach Secretary of War Pete Hegseth rose quickly. Hegseth, who was confirmed by a razor-thin margin, has long been a target of members in both parties, who are offended by his aggressive efforts to implement a more old-school tough-warrior ethos in the U.S. military. Furthermore, his loyalty to President Trump and the ongoing conflict with Iran have led some Republicans to question Hegseth's leadership. Rep. James Comer contended, "We have no idea what the strategy is moving forward on Iran." Hegseth has dug in, with his special adviser Tim Parlatore saying, "He's not going anywhere. He intends to serve the full four years." Yet Republican Rep. Thomas Massie is planning to force an impeachment vote on Hegseth this week. Should it fail, Democrats are likely to pick it up again in the new Congress.

White House leans into tariffs after midterms
"We are quadrupling down on tariffs," said White House trade adviser Peter Navarro in an interview. "They are just kicking [butt]." This stance flies in the face of exit polling, which found that 66% of voters believe President Trump's tariffs negatively impacted the economy, compared with just 21% who believe they helped. Navarro defended Trump's tariffs, contending that they have produced "an incredible manufacturing renaissance." He explained, "We're seeing it in the ISM Manufacturing Index, which is on a 10-month tear now ... and it's [because of] tariffs. Look, the world cheats us, and when they cheat us, our jobs go offshore. When we put up the tariff wall, they can't cheat us, and the jobs come home." Meanwhile, Democrats led by House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries are promising to "eradicate the Trump tariffs."

Eisenkot gets nod to form Israeli government instead of Netanyahu
On Sunday, Israeli President Isaac Herzog gave former Israeli military chief Gadi Eisenkot a mandate to form a new government, not Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who secured the most seats in Israel's Knesset. Eisenkot has four weeks to build a coalition and achieve a 61-seat majority. If he fails, the mandate will likely pass to Netanyahu. If neither succeeds, another election will take place. Two smaller factions have already offered Eisenkot their support, bringing his total from 21 seats to 40. After accepting Herzog's mandate, Eisenkot criticized Netanyahu and welcomed any partners who aligned with four principles, including commitment to destroying terrorist Hamas. "We must form a national emergency government," Eisenkot said. "This will require creative and unconventional political steps."

Antisemitic boycott backfires in Philadelphia
Several activist groups planned a boycott of several Jewish-owned businesses in the Philadelphia area for Sunday. However, the protest triggered a much larger counterprotest. The groups protesting the six restaurants in the Rittenhouse area were sponsored by Penn Faculty and Staff for Justice in Palestine, Writers Against the War in Gaza, Philly Bike on Your Left, and members of the Philadelphia chapter of the DSA. Several elected officials condemned the boycott, including Gov. Josh Shapiro, state AG Dave Sunday, and Mayor Cherelle Parker, who said that "singling out businesses because their owners are Jewish is unacceptable and has no place in our city." Police had to keep the two groups separate after scuffles at the start of the opposing demonstrations, but participants eventually went their separate ways and tensions eased. The Jewish-owned restaurants were not hurt financially.

Houthis hit Aramco tower
The Houthis continue to harass the Saudi kingdom, launching a drone and missile attack on the Aramco tower in Riyadh. Saudi Arabia's Energy Ministry reported that a Saudi-led coalition intercepted the two ballistic missiles, that no one was hurt, and that the damage to the building was caused by shrapnel. The building contained residential units but was empty at the time of the strike due to warnings by Saudi civil-defense officials shortly before the attack. The Houthis are claiming responsibility for the strike and are touting that it caused significant damage. The Houthi attack followed airstrikes by Saudi Arabia on rebel-controlled areas of Yemen. The conflict in Yemen began in 2014 when the Houthis seized the capital. After several years of a ceasefire, war broke out again when the Houthis captured territory along the Red Sea coast to attack international shipping.

Nvidia investigates Jensen Huang spy campaign
Intelligence reports indicate that Jensen Huang, the CEO of tech giant Nvidia, took a mistress who was spying on him for the Chinese government. China denied the allegations, but it appears that the Nvidia CEO and Alice Huang (no relation), a Chinese data center executive, became intimate despite Jensen having been married for over 40 years. Nvidia will investigate reports that Jensen was being spied on. The original intelligence reports were conducted outside the company, and the affair seemed fairly obvious to those at the company paying attention, so it seems Nvidia wanted to sweep it under the rug to continue its dealings with China. The company exported chips to the country, and the threat of interrupting those exports has tanked Nvidia's value over the past couple of days.

El-Sayed calls Michigan the "capital of Arab America"
Last week, Abdul El-Sayed became the first-ever Muslim elected to the United States Senate. During his victory speech, he said, "I know we're here in DC, which, of course, is the capital of the United States of America, but Michigan is the capital of Arab America." El-Sayed also celebrated with the Arabic phrase "alhamdulillah," which means "praise be to God." During his campaign, El-Sayed repeatedly criticized Israel and made controversial comments about 9/11. He has faced pushback for his association with Hasan Piker and discussion about the October 7 Hamas terrorist attacks. Critics often say El-Sayed exemplifies the red-green alliance and is a socialist in all but name. While the Michigan senator-elect isn't a DSA member, he supports similar policies, such as Medicare for All and abolishing ICE.

Chappelle mocks Kirk's death
Professional comedians are constantly searching for ways to make ordinary, or even tragic, events humorous. When it works, it is the best of comedy; when it doesn't, they draw backlash. Dave Chappelle is no stranger to jokes that draw backlash, but his recent comments about Charlie Kirk's death certainly seem to lack humor. "Ever since that guy Charlie Kirk got murdered," Chappelle said at Madison Square Garden on Friday, "and I shouldn't say this publicly — but I feel better." The New York crowd naturally laughed at the death of a peaceful conservative figure. Right-wingers online have been quick to point out that Charlie had a very different response when Chappelle was attacked on stage in 2022, calling it "Sinister & Un-American" when prosecutors refused to charge the attacker.

Headlines

- Trump says deportation policy "too tough" in push for bipartisan deal (Washington Examiner)
- Georgia House race flips after hundreds of votes go unreported, sparking investigation (RedState)
- FAA says air traffic control will phase out floppy disks in the next two years (Not the Bee)
- Russell Brand sentenced to prison for rape, sexual assault of four women (NY Post)

The Executive News Summary is compiled daily by Jordan Candler, Thomas Gallatin, Sterling Henry, Jacob Geoffrey, Hudson Baldwin, and Sophie Starkova. For the archive, click here.

SHORT CUTS

From the Loony Left
"Whenever Trump defies the will of the American people or the law, we will launch investigations, take him to court, and entangle him in legislative razor wire." —Senate Democrat Leader Chuck Schumer

"Stephen Miller is a dangerous xenophobe and reckless extremist who has American blood on his hands. His presence in government should be eradicated like a malignant tumor." —House Democrat Leader Hakeem Jeffries

"A lot of my policies are just about asking: Where there's a corporation with too much power in society, how do we take some of that power back and give it to everyday people?" —Michigan Senator-elect Abdul "I'm Not a Socialist" El-Sayed

"Michigan is the capital of Arab America." —Abdul El-Sayed

"I can't even begin to tell ... how much untapped hatred I have for Donald Trump and the MAGA movement at large. ... I will hate this motherf—er forever ... and everybody that voted for him." —Jennifer Welch

"Ever since that guy Charlie Kirk got murdered ... I feel better." —Dave Chappelle

From the Reasonable Right
"As for all those voters who got suckered into the Demo midterm tsunami, let me say this: When socialists tore down the Berlin Wall, nobody, and I mean NOBODY, ran to the communist side!" —Mark Alexander

"Any explanation of 2026 that doesn't also account for 2024 is half-baked. The reasons why Democrats & Republicans both got spanked need to be taken together." —Dan McLaughlin

"Voters did not merely register dissatisfaction with a few candidates. They rejected a governing style that treated loyalty as a virtue greater than judgment." —Armstrong Williams

"Every conspiracy theorist who suggested the midterms were going to get canceled should ... get canceled. Democracy is still alive. It's not dying in darkness." —Tim Graham

"To see leftist podcasters, comedians, and commentators laugh about political assassination as though it's entertainment and the destruction of a human life is a punchline, is beyond disgusting. My husband, Charlie Kirk, was killed in an act of political violence, something our two children and I will live with every day for the rest of our lives. A culture that laughs at assassination is one of profound moral decay. It threatens the very foundation of our country and the principles that hold our democracy together." —Erika Kirk

"No election will ever fix a nation whose people no longer fear God." —Brilyn Hollyhand

From the Archives
"If evil people hate you, well, you might be doing something right." —Elon Musk in 2024

"I don't think the Democratic Party is gonna be able to go forward until they make a decision. Whose side are you on here? Are you on the side of Western civilization and Western values, or are you on the side of the terrorists?" —Bill Maher in 2025

Belly Laugh of the Day
"Democrats proudly announced that they had already delivered on their campaign promise to improve affordability, having made stock prices far, far cheaper in just a few days." —The Babylon Bee